

Garrard County

Geographic and Geological Information

- Garrard County is located in the Outer Bluegrass region of central Kentucky. The mostly rolling terrain includes the Knobs and foothills in the southeast and the Palisades of the Kentucky River to the north.²⁸
- Garrard County sits on the [Cincinnati Arch](#), a broad structural uplift.
- The [TransAmerica](#) Cycling Trail, a bike trail from Astoria, OR to Yorktown, VA, passes through Garrard County.

County History

- Evidence suggests that the area of Garrard County was long occupied by Native Americans.¹⁵
- The majority of the hardy, early settlers were Scotch-Irish, but many more settlers came from the Wilderness Road in the late 1700s. These newcomers were planters from the Virginia Piedmont responding to economic pressure from war and worsening soil.¹⁶
- On December 17th, 1796 Garrard County became the 25th county in Kentucky, to become effective June 1, 1797. The territory for Garrard County came from Lincoln, Madison, and Mercer Counties.
- William Buford donated 57.5 acres to the town trustees for town lots and a county seat in 1797. The town of Lancaster was established. Lancaster was most likely named after Lancaster, PA.¹⁷
- Lancaster was taken by Rebel Forces in 1862 during the Civil War.²⁵
- Camp Dick Robinson, in Garrard County, was the first recruiting station for the Union Army south of the Ohio River, its creation ordered by Abraham Lincoln.
- The [USS Garrard](#), commissioned in 1945, was named in honor of Garrard County for the county's patriotism during World War II.²⁶
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was inspired by **Harriet Beecher Stowe's** visit to the plantation of Thomas Kennedy. Her book became extremely influential to the abolitionist movement. The [cabin of Uncle Tom](#) was located behind the Kennedy mansion, and a replica is planned to be built in Garrard County.

People

Visitors

- [Daniel Boone](#) laid out a trace through modern Garrard County as early as 1776¹. He also wintered alone in the area of what became Garrard County, awed by the beautiful country.²
- [William Clark](#) (of the Lewis and Clark expedition) stopped over in Lancaster in 1809 to repair a broken leather on his carriage and dined at Buford's Tavern. He then spent the night on the Dick's River at the home of Captain Taylor³.
- [Henry Clay](#), [Governor Letcher](#), [Cassius M. Clay](#), and [John J. Crittenden](#) were among the many travelers who frequently stopped at the Old Burnt Tavern.⁴

Garrard County Society, Residents, and Births

- **The Traveling Church** led by Lewis Craig held their first worship service in 1781. The church at Gilbert's Creek was one of the first Baptist Churches established in Kentucky. The congregation moved from Virginia, earning them the title of The Traveling Church.⁵
- **[Carry A. Nation](#)**, the anti-alcohol crusader, was born in Garrard County in 1846. Standing six feet tall and carrying an axe, she once claimed, "I am a bulldog, running at the feet of Jesus, barking at what He doesn't like."⁶
- **Thomas Kennedy** built his brick mansion that would be part of the inspiration for Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the early 1800s. Historical records suggest that **[Harriet Beecher Stowe](#)** visited the plantation.⁷ Kennedy and William Whitley were early enthusiasts of thoroughbred racing. It's even possible that Kennedy first introduced thoroughbred racing to Kentucky.⁸
- **[Simeon H. Anderson](#)**, born 1802 outside of Lancaster, was a U.S. Representative for Kentucky.²²
- **[Richard Dickerson Gholson](#)**, born 1804 in Garrard County, went on to become the 3rd Territorial Governor of Washington (prior to official statehood) after being appointed by President James Buchanan.²³
- **[Henry Smith](#)**, from Garrard County, was the first American Governor of Texas. A leader in the independence movement for Texas, he was named provisional governor of the Republic of Texas. He also served as secretary of the treasury under the Sam Houston administration.²⁴
- **[Robert P. Letcher](#)**, settled in Garrard County, his home known as the "Home of Statesmen," (originally built by **[John Boyle](#)**, another Kentucky politician, in 1798) and went on to become the 15th Governor of Kentucky in 1840.
- **[William Owsley](#)** (16th Kentucky Governor) built "Pleasant Retreat" in Lancaster in 1819, where he and his family lived for over thirty years.⁹
- **[William O. Bradley](#)**, the first Republican Governor of Kentucky was born in Garrard County in 1847. He served as the 32nd governor of Kentucky and also became a United States Senator.¹⁸
- **Pvt. George D. Scott**, born in Garrard County in 1850, would go on to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for extraordinary personal heroism at the Battle of Little Big Horn, Montana, under the command of General Custer.¹⁹
- **[Bradley Kincaid](#)**, born in the community of Point Leavell in 1895, was an American folk singer known as the "Kentucky Mountain Boy." He sold an estimated 20,000,000 records¹⁰ and was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.
- **[John and Ray Kennedy](#)**, born 1915 and 1913 respectively, were well known African-American jockeys from Garrard County.¹¹ The brothers were featured in the American Saddlebred Museum 2007 exhibit in Lexington, KY - *Out of the Shadows: Bringing to Light Black Horsemen in Saddlebred History*.
- **[Earle Combs](#)**, a Hall of Fame baseball player for the New York Yankees, was once the president of People's Bank in Paint Lick.²⁹ He was part of the fabled 1927 Yankees team known as Muderers' Row.
- **[Maxine "Mom" Blakeman](#)** began making her creamed pull candy in Lancaster in the 1940s and she also ran a restaurant on the town square. Colonel Harlan

Sanders later encouraged her to market the candy, and the candy is still available from the family owned company today.

- [Kenneth Davis](#) resides in Garrard County. Davis played basketball at Georgetown College and was the captain of the 1972 U.S. Olympic team in Munich. The team won, but refused to accept, the silver medal after a controversial defeat to the Soviet Union.
- **Melissa Prewitt (aka Etta Britt)**, of Garrard County, was part of the 1970s pop-styled country band, [Dave & Sugar](#). The band recorded multiple number one hits and made it to the Billboard country music charts sixteen times.
- **Dean Cornett** of Paint Lick was named one of President George H.W. Bush's first Thousand Points of Light in 1990. Dean was also presented the Volunteer Action Award at the White House.²⁷
- [John Michael Montgomery](#), a current country music artist, was raised and lived in Garrard County. The music video for his 1995 hit, "Sold (The Grundy County Auction Incident)," was filmed at the Garrard County stockyards and parts of his 1997 song "I Miss You a Little" were also filmed in Garrard County.¹²
- [Eddie Montgomery](#), brother of John Michael Montgomery, also lived in Garrard County. Eddie is also a famous current country music artist, in the duo "Montgomery Gentry."¹²

Architecture

- [The Grand Theater](#), built in 1925, was a family theatre in Garrard County. Saturday matinees were very popular and there were stage shows as well as vaudeville acts and the theater was the first air conditioned building in the community. The theater closed in 1967, but plans are underway to renovate and reopen the local landmark.¹⁴

Agriculture

- **The Walker Fox Hounds** were an internationally known product of Garrard County. John W. Walker and George Washington Maupin bred the dogs, and by the 1860s, the hounds were in demand by hunters.²⁰
- **Tom Bowling**, [H.P. McGrath](#)'s racehorse, was brought to a Garrard County farm owned by Richard McGrath. H.P. McGrath won the first ever Kentucky Derby with Aristides, but called Tom Bowling his greatest horse. Tom Bowling won 14 of 17 races and later died in 1893 and was buried on Richard McGrath's farm just south of Bryantsville.¹³
- **Quantico** was established at the mouth of Sugar Creek in 1798. Quantico remained an important shipping port for farm products from the region up to the mid 1800s. Important crops to the region included tobacco and hemp. The soil in Garrard County produces burley, the most sought after tobacco type. In 1938 or 1939, the last crop of hemp, once an important crop to the regional economy, was believed to have been planted.²¹

Footnotes

- 1 – *Patches of Garrard County*, Compiled and Edited by The Lancaster Woman's Club. Reprint 2003, p. 51
- 2 – *Garrard County, Kentucky A Crossroad in Eden* by Fred Simpson p.1
- 3 – From Margaret Simpson's typed notes, "Important Garrard County Happenings"
- 4 – *Patches* p. 266
- 5 – *Patches* p. 221
- 6 – *Patches* p. 281
- 7 – *Patches* p. 386
- 8 – Published in The Lexington Herald, Sep/Oct 195? – "General Tom" Kennedy by George N. Reynolds
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~josephkennedy/Source%20Materials/Kennedy/20-%27General%20Tom%27%20Kennedy.doc>
- 9 – *Patches* p. 234
- 10 – *Patches* p. 325
- 11 - http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/nkaa/subject.php?sub_id=57
- 12 – www.johnmichaelmontgomery.com/
- 13 – *Patches* p. 256 and <http://sports.espn.go.com/sports/horse/news/story?id=5086727>
- 14 – *Patches* p.147, air conditioning info from Garrard Economic Development Presentation
- 15 - *Garrard County, Kentucky A Crossroad in Eden* p. 1
- 16 - *Garrard County, Kentucky A Crossroad in Eden* p. 3
- 17 – Margaret Simpson's notes, "Important Garrard County Happenings"
- 18 – <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000749>
- 19 - <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=30890>
- 20 – *Patches* p. 346
- 21 – Colorful Garrard County, coloring book from Garrard County Historical Society and *Patches* p. 152 for hemp
- 22 - <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=A000232>
- 23 - <http://genforum.genealogy.com/cgi-bin/pageload.cgi?richard.gholson::gholson::341.html>
- 24 - <http://www.garrardcounty.ky.gov/tourism/>
- 25 – Margaret Simpson's typed notes, "Important Garrard County Happenings"
- 26 - http://books.google.com/books?id=QYzXQWtwWzEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=subject:%22Garrard+County+%28Ky.%29%22&hl=en&ei=SbEfTOaVCYWglAevxe2kDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CC4Q6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=false
- 27 - http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=2583&year=1990&month=all
- 28 - <http://chandler.house.gov/district/garrard.shtml>
- 29 - http://books.google.com/books?id=QYzXQWtwWzEC&pg=PA119&lpg=PA119&dq=earle+combs+garrard&source=bl&ots=E4l8sspgQ0&sig=0NomRG5vwDkyVDNVVHxe8QNZnI4&hl=en&ei=geFFTOOrOJ8ilnQeHsczZAw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBcQ6AEwAA#v=snippet&q=people%27s%20bank&f=false